

A writing instrument, such as a pen, mechanical pencil, felt marker, or touch-screen stylus, which incorporates a (a) laser pointer, for highlighting a target, and/or (b) a laser bar code reader, which is operable either (i) by manual scanning by the user of the laser beam over the symbol, or (ii) by automatic self-scanning or motion of the beam over a path by means of a motor drive. A manually operable switch is disposed from one mode of use to the other, and also functions to move an appropriate focussing optical element in and out of the beam path.